



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
CIVIL AIR PATROL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA
36112-6332

12 December 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR REGION AND WING COMMANDERS

FROM: HQ CAP/DO

SUBJECT: New AF Policy on the use of FRS Radios

1. Great results from a CAP mission have generated new policy from the AF on our use of the Family Radio Service (FRS). On 27 June 2003, Colorado Wing's Cortez Squadron was called to assist the Dolores County Sheriff in a search for 12 day-hikers lost for 20 hours. One team of hikers had come out of the woods on schedule but the other team, consisting of 10 young girls and two adult leaders, was lost. Two air sorties failed to turn up the lost hikers until mission personnel learned that the hikers had FRS capability. On the third sortie, CAP began calling on a borrowed FRS radio. There was an immediate reply and within a few minutes they had located the hikers trapped in a deep canyon. By 1000 the next morning the lost hikers were rescued and Colorado Wing was awarded 12 "saves" by AFRCC.

2. This mission success prompted the AF to revisit the policy on FRS. CAP's position was that current restrictions are intended to prevent federal activities from using FRS to satisfy their internal communications needs. We felt the policy was not intended to prevent use of FRS to contact a victim in order to expedite a rescue. The appropriate AF office in Washington studied the issue and agreed with us that this use of FRS was justifiable and could be repeated when necessary to save lives.

3. This is a significant step forward but we must be clear that this does not mean FRS is now legal for other uses. We still can not use FRS to talk CAP-to-CAP on Emergency Services (ES) missions. Intra Squad Radios (ISR) and VHF-FM radios are designed for those functions. However, this new policy does allow us to use FRS to talk to victims. Also, FRS continues to be allowable for non-ES activities. Please pass this along to your units and let us know if you have any questions. The NHQ POC is Malcolm Kyser. He can be reached at 334-953-7447 or mkyser@cap.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Salvador".

JOHN A. SALVADOR
Director of Operations

cc:
HQ CAP/CC/CV/CS/XP/DO/GC/LG/EXI
CAP Operations Committee
CAP Region and Wing Comm Directors
HQ CAP-USAF/CC/CV/XO/IG/JA
CAP-USAF LR/CCs; State Directors